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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our going out and coming in, give us Your wisdom to know what we should do.

Deliver us from the cowardice that runs from the truth.

Deliver us from the lethargy that will not learn the truth.

Deliver us from the prejudice that will not see the truth.

Deliver us from the stubbornness that will not accept the truth.

Deliver us from the pride that will not speak the truth.

Strengthen our Senators today to do Your will. Give them the courage to make bold ventures for Your glory. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

DEFICIT REDUCTION OMNIBUS RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1932, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1932) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 202(a) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006 (H. Con. Res. 95).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 8 p.m. shall be divided between the Senator from New Hampshire, Mr. GREGG, for 4½ hours and the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, for 5½ hours.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will immediately resume debate on the deficit reduction package after a brief statement I have to make.

Chairman GREGG opened debate on the bill yesterday and will be here managing the bill this morning. Last week we entered an agreement which divided the statutory time limit between 3 days, with all time expiring on Wednesday at 6 p.m.

During today's session, Senators will be able to offer amendments. However, votes on those amendments will be stacked to occur at a later time. I will be working with the Democratic leader to determine the best time for those votes to occur. I had hoped that we could dispose of some of the proposed amendments with votes during today's session. However, at this point, we have several scheduling conflicts, and we may have to delay those votes until tomorrow. On Wednesday, we have several Members attending the funeral of Rosa Parks, and we will need to schedule votes to accommodate that service as well.

Having said that, this will be a very busy week. Senators will be able to offer amendments after the expiration of time and that leads to the so called vote-arama. I encourage Senators to offer their amendments during the debate period so that we can limit the amendments considered after time expires.

I do not believe the vote-arama is the most constructive use of the Senate's time, and I believe most Members are frustrated with that process—at least halfway through the vote-arama, as

they express that frustration directly to me and leadership. During those consecutive votes, the Senate votes on amendment after amendment with very little time and little explanation of the amendments.

So I hope we can do it in an orderly process over the next several days. I do want Members to come to the floor early so we can show some restraint when the 20 hours of debate time is complete.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that we will be considering the appropriations conference reports as they arrive from the House. Once the House has completed action and those conference reports become available, we will address them. We have the Agriculture appropriations conference report already, and we will be scheduling that for a vote sometime this week.

AVIAN FLU

Mr. President, on another issue, I want to make a few comments. Shortly, the President will begin to unveil his plan to prepare the Nation against the threat of bird flu or avian flu, a potential for initially an epidemic and then pandemic nobody was thinking very much about a year ago.

I do thank the President for his bold and decisive leadership. He recognizes the urgency for our Nation to take immediate action to prepare for and to prevent the spread of such a pandemic and the impact it would have on this Nation and, indeed, nations throughout the world.

Last night, the Secretary of Health and Human Services began briefing people on the plan that will be laid out by the President today. He has been discussing in meetings over the last several weeks the importance of comprehensive organization at all levels of Government. It is not just a Federal issue or a State issue or a local issue, it is all three. The vertical integration of communication and response and preparedness is complex, but it is something that we absolutely must address. We would have to mobilize from

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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